

# **DNREC announces Delaware State Parks' annual camping numbers hit record high in 2015**

*Upcoming Memorial Day holiday weekend booked solid for campgrounds, cabins and cottages*

**DOVER** – As Memorial Day weekend nears with the unofficial start of summer boasting the best weather forecast in recent memory, DNREC's Division of Parks & Recreation is preparing for another banner year after serving a record number of campers and cabin guests in 2015. Camping last year was higher than at any other time in parks' history, with a 19 percent increase over 2014. According to reservation data, the newly-renovated North Inlet campground at Delaware Seashore State Park played an instrumental role in the record 86,200 nights that people camped in a state park last year.

"Investments in state parks provide long-lasting recreational and educational benefits to Delawareans and enhances our quality of life," said Governor Jack Markell. "These investments also help drive our thriving tourism industry and bring additional revenue to our state. The results of the camping survey bear this out. Campgrounds in Delaware State Parks are world-class, and that's why Delawareans and visitors alike rate them so highly, and why campers return year after year."

"These survey results reinforce the fact that we have the best state parks in the nation, for which Delaware State Parks was awarded the prestigious 2015 National Gold Medal Award for Excellence in Park and Recreation Management," said DNREC Secretary David Small. "Our parks offer unique, varied and

memorable experiences not found in other state parks in our region. We expect that plans for new amenities and other improvements will only enhance the enjoyment of our campers and further increase visitation.”

Just don’t try getting into a parks’ campground, cabin or cottage for the upcoming holiday weekend – since Monday, every campsite, cabin and cottage statewide has been booked solid for the weekend. But Delaware State Parks Director Ray Bivens advises campers to be proactive for the future and go online now to make reservations for other popular holidays like July 4, Labor Day and Halloween weekends, since bookings for these dates also are filling fast.

“We are delighted to find out that state parks’ campgrounds are more popular than ever,” Director Bivens said. “Residents and visitors alike are coming in increasing numbers to relax, connect with nature and spend time with family and friends. Our visitor surveys and reservation data show that campers appreciate the investments we are making to improve and modernize Delaware State Parks campgrounds.”

Several of the Delaware State Park campgrounds have seen improvements over the past two years:

- **Killens Pond** – New fire pits for the cabins and 50-amp electrical service for campsites have been added, and the largest waterpark renovation in the history of the facility is underway.
- **Cape Henlopen** – Two new bathroom facilities and six cabins have been added. This winter, electric service will be added to campsites.
- **Lums Pond** – A \$5 million-plus renovation to add full hookup sites and new bathrooms is underway. Reservations can be made now for the opening, expected in mid-June.
- **Delaware Seashore** – The North Inlet campground has opened with full hook-up sites, new bathroom and laundry facilities, a playground, and a promenade walkway that

allows access to both sides of Indian River Bridge.

- **Trap Pond** – The Trap Pond Partners originated a free borrow-a-bike program.

To learn more about the improvements happening in Delaware State Park campgrounds or to make a reservation, visit [www.destateparks.com](http://www.destateparks.com), or call the state park call center at 1-877-98-PARKS.

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